

# news

## Safe Haven partnership to strengthen Title IX resources on campus

**ALAYNA ROSS**  
Reporter

Ashland University announced that it will be combining forces with Safe Haven of Ashland, Ohio, and will be applying a \$10,000 Strengthening Partnerships Grant from the Ohio Department of Higher Education to bring awareness, education and proven forms of sexual assault prevention to the AU community.

Safe Haven was originally brought to AU’s campus because state coalitions started providing more training and information to campuses, as well as rape crisis centers all across the state of Ohio. Through these trainings, the Ashland Community recognized a gap in the services that needed to be filled.

Safe Haven and Ashland University work collectively to ensure all gaps are filled and the assistance needed for students on campus are provided.

Dr. Robert Pool, vice president of student affairs and Title IX coordinator for students, explains the various services AU uses to provide support for students.

“AU partners with several Community supports, including Safe Haven, Ashland Police Department, Local hospital staff, and provides confidential resources to help students’ get help and get answers,”

Pool said. “We also work hard to address immediate and long term safety, privacy and fairness needs.”

Alison Webb, Outreach and Prevention Coordinator at Safe Haven in Ashland, said Safe Haven started as a rape crisis hotline in 1997, in 2000 they began providing hospital advocacy and in 2006, they opened the doors to our emergency shelter.

“Safe Haven is a program of Appleaseed Community Mental Health Center which means we have direct access to things such as counseling and substance use treatment that other victim service programs might not have direct access to,” Webb said.

Overall, Safe Haven offers emergency shelter, a 24/7 Confidential Hotline, campus, court, and hospital advocacy, community outreach and education, and support groups for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. Specifically, the Campus Advocate offers Title IX advocacy, personalized safety planning, additional resources and education, and facilitation of a support group specifically for students on campus.

Safe Haven worked with Ashland University to bring an advocate to campus for students and staff who may have experienced domestic or sexual violence in their life either before or during their time at AU.

The Campus Advocate is a con-



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fidential resource on campus. This means that anything shared with the Campus Advocate is not reported to the university unless the person disclosing information wants to report. The only exception is if someone were to disclose wanting to harm themselves or others.

Hannah Shaw, a 2019 graduate of Ashland University with a bachelors in social work, has recently been hired as the AU Campus Advocate from Safe Haven for this year.

“When students visit the campus advocate they can expect a listening ear, a non-judgement space to share anything they want, and they can expect to be believed and supported in their story and decisions,” Shaw said. “They can expect to be able to work with the trained advocate to come up with a personalized safety plan that best fits their situation and needs as well as gain more knowledge about other resources offered and at their disposal.”

Shaw has an office space on cam-

pus in the basement of the Library in the Reinhart Center, office 17. There are also office hours Tuesdays and Wednesdays 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Thursdays from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

The 24/7 Safe Haven hotline is 419-289-8085 to speak to a trained advocate. For those looking to contact Hannah Shaw, her email is hshaw@safehavenofashland.org or you can call the hotline and ask for Shaw specifically.

## AU sophomore creates sexual assault advocacy group “Elevate”

**LEAH BURTSCHER**  
Reporter

While AU is working to better their response to issues regarding Title IX like with their pairing with Safe Haven of Ohio, some still believe that there is room for improvement. Sophomore history and political science major Reina Britt has taken matters into her own hands and created her sexual assault awareness group “Elevate” on campus.

Britt became a victim of sexual assault on campus in September 2019. After reporting the assault at the end of the fall semester, she was given an interview the first day on campus after winter break.

After the interview, she decided to conduct a formal investigation. The investigation lasted from January to June due to COVID issues and difficulties getting the man accused to meet.

“Throughout my entire experience, I really felt like I was a name on a piece of paper,” Britt said.

Britt believes that her case ruling does not match the information on the AU website.

According to the Title IX office, “Ashland University’s standard of proof is preponderance of the evidence. This means that, based upon the information provided in an investigation, it is ‘more likely than not’ that the behavior occurred.”

Britt took this as an opportunity to endorse change. Since her experience, she has taken it upon herself to create a safe place for victims and allies to meet.

The Elevate Facebook page about section read: “Elevate provides survivors of sexual violence a healing and supportive environment with a group of their peers. With group and one-on-one support,



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“Elevate provides survivors of sexual violence a healing and supportive environment with a group of peers.”

survivors can work through their trauma and make a lasting impact in the Ashland Community.”

Elevate had its first meeting on Sept. 4, and has many events planned throughout the National Domestic Violence Awareness month of October.

A candlelight vigil was held at Corner park on Oct. 5, and a zoom movie night, online book club discussion and survivor speakout are scheduled for Oct. 22, Oct. 26 and Oct. 28 respectively.

Britt believes that Ashland University needs to improve their Title IX process, and that the Safe Haven pairing is a good start.

“I truly felt that I had no control over the situation and there was little care to my well being aside from the fact that my advocate was abso-

lutely wonderful,” Britt said. “This feeling comes from an institution that stresses that they are trying to be as victim-friendly as possible and I think that there needs to be much more talk on how to humanize these situations and really treat all survivors with kindness and compassion.”

Elevate is set to change the narrative of sexual assault on Ashland’s campus. Britt believes this is one of many steps in order to achieve a safer campus for AU students.

“I hope that Elevate is able to impact so many more people and give survivors a safe place to come, surrounded by their peers,” Britt said. “I know it has started making its mark but I really want it to be a resource people use when going through this process.”

## Barnet for State Representative for the 70th District

**CHRISTINE JENKINSON**  
AU-Live Breaking News Reporter

Kevin Barnet came from New York and has 15 years of experience working in a union, as well as five years working in management. 14-years ago, he moved to Ohio, opened a bed and breakfast (which lasted for five years) and is now working in insurance for Allstate.

However, he has decided to run against the current state representative, Darrell Kick, to represent the 70th District. One thing he is focused on in his campaign is bringing more unions to the area.

Barnet believes that doing so will “make [people] more money, more successful and live the quality of life in Ohio that people are leaving Ohio to go get.”

Equipped with his slogan “Fairness and dignity for all,” he made a campaign promise to be more accessible and have tough conversations with residents. Barnet said that being accessible means going to residents, not residents going to him.

“[The slogan] means working with the people, doing things for small businesses and workers, being on the side of trying to grow unions for good-paying jobs with benefits,” Barnet said. “Doing the best you can for the people of District 70—being in the community.”

The second goal Barnet has when elected into office is to work on public education.

“I’d like to work on...an equitable way for teachers and students to have access to things they need to be successful,” Barnet said.

Barnet has needed to rely on Zoom and Facebook to keep his message alive.

On Sept. 26, a virtual “Meet the Candidates” event was held on Zoom for voters to ask questions

and stay connected with candidates.

“The big difference is you can’t get together with people [and] can’t speak with people,” he said. “That’s a big part of getting out there and people knowing who you are.”

“During the summer, opportunities to do things outdoors, I think people were reluctant to do them, because of the small turn out,” he continued. “People are worried about it but that’s a good thing.”

Barnet explained the cause and effect of Ohio’s COVID numbers increasing. This issue can spur from simply going out to restaurants. Each outing is taking chances that affect the health of the state.

“What we need to do in the state-house is pass legislation and money for quick result testing to trace where people are,” he said. “Get numbers down to have people feeling confident when they go out that they won’t catch this; we will be on our way to restoring the economy here. It’s the only thing we can do until a vaccine. We need to do these things to build consumer confidence.”

Barnett believes he is the best candidate for state representative, avoiding party affiliation.

“I hope that people look at the two candidates and don’t look at the ‘R’ and ‘D,’” Barnet said. “Do a little research. I know people’s time is precious and they don’t have time to do that. I think you’ll like what I have to say and with what my platform is.”

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